A 25

Introduction

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Negros is a boot-shaped island in the southern Visayas, the fourth largest island in the Philippines, slightly smaller than Connecticut. (See Plate I.)[1] Negros is 118 miles long and varies from 22 to 49 miles in width. To the northwest is the triangular island of Panay, separated from Negros by a narrow strait. To the east, as if balanced on Negros' "toe" is Cebu, parted from Negros by the Tañon Strait. The northern tip of Negros is about 300 statute miles from the Philippine capital, Manila.

> All of the island [Negros] lies well within the tropics, occupying a position between latitudes 9° and 11° North. Altogether, the island of Negros represents a total land surface of 4,997 square miles, or about four per cent of the total area of the Philippines.[1]

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The physiographic and, to a less extent, the major political divisions of the island depend upon a central mountain system, lying slightly to the east of the center of Negros, and running north to south. (See Plate II.)[2] To the west this mountain system descends to the broad and fertile plains of Negros Occidental province. To the east the mountains tumble toward the Tañon Strait, tapering off and fringed by the small isolated plains of eastern Negros Oriental province. To the south and southwest, the mountain region merges into a dissected hill and plateau region, dominated in

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[1] Wernstedt, op. cit., p.2.

1 [See p. 26, cat. 131 - Analyst]

2 [See p. 27, cat. 133 - "]

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
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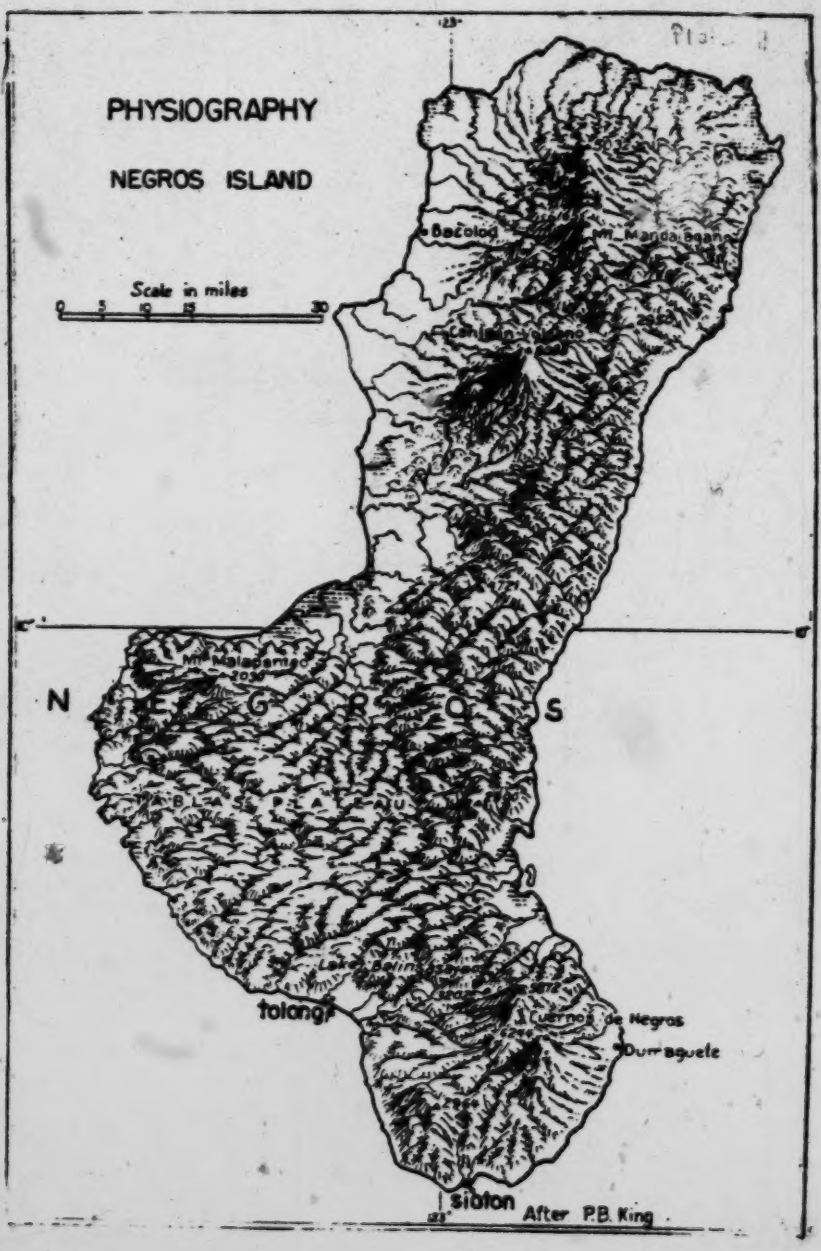

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southeastern Negros by a cluster of volcanic peaks. Two of the island's best known volcanoes are Canlaon (8,088 feet), north-central Negros, and Cuernos de Negros ("Horns of Negros") in the southeast. Canlaon is still an active volcano while Cuernos de Negros is dormant.[2] On a clear day the blue outline of Zamboanga peninsula, Mindanao, normally wreathed with clouds, is visible from Siaton.

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Political Divisions of Negros

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Negros is divided into two provinces, Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental, the latter including the subprovince of Siquijor Island which lies off the southeast tip of Negros. In 1948 1,482,219 people lived in Negros' two provinces: this was 8 per cent of the total population of the Philippines.[3] In the same year there were 50 provinces, 983 municipalities, 21 chartered

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[2] Steere, traveling in Negros in 1898, states Canlaon Volcano was once known as Malaspina. He visited Cuernos de Negros and wrote that while he and his party heard of no recent accounts of eruptions, "...we were struck with the appearance of immense ancient lava streams reaching from the summit of the mountain to the sea. Some of them looked like gigantic railway embankments, so even was their grade and so level their surface. They were too recent to have weathered into good soils and were covered for the most part with low trees and coarse grass." J. B. Steere, "Volcanoes and Earthquakes in the Philippines," Scientific American, N.S., LXXVIII, (June 18, 1898), p.395.

[3] 1948 Philippine Census (Population), p.9.

original Visayan tongue from which stem all other Visayan dialects. He states that prior to the arrival of Cebuano-speaking Filipinos, the dialect of eastern Leyte and Samar was basically Bicol and that of Panay was mainly Tagalog, the present national language of the Philippines. The Cebuano intrusion resulted in a blended Tagalog-Cebuano dialect in Panay and a Bicol-Cebuano blend in Leyte and Samar. The original dialects of Cebu, Bohol and Negros were displaced by the flood of emigrant Cebuanos.[17]

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Major Landform Regions of Negros

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The West Negros plain of Negros Occidental province is ranked among the larger plains of the Philippines and dominates an important part of the island's economy. (See Plate V.)[1] This moderately level plain is almost 100 miles in length and has a width of almost 30 miles in the locality of Bacolod. The plain has been subdivided into northern, west-central and southern sections.

The northern subdivision of this plain, with swampy coastal areas often covered with mangroves, is narrower than the southern or west-central subdivisions. Along the interior borders of the northern subdivision, the plain rises to join the central mountain system. The major crop, covering most of the land, is sugar cane. The west-central subdivision, one of the most important

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[17] Ibid., pp.174-8.

1 [See p.38, cat. 133 -- ANALYST]

20: Hart E-5 (195.) 1954 OA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan OA14

PLATE V

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economic regions of Negros, is devoted almost entirely to sugar cane except for a fringe of lowland rice along the southwestern coast. The land is relatively level along the coast but undulation occurs as the plain approaches the mountains. Only the northern and southern subdivisions of the plain have drainage problems. 133 31

The southern division of the west Negros plain has the greatest amount of acreage devoted to lowland rice, although it is also a sugar cane area. Here flows the Ilog, the longest river in Negros, navigable for five miles by lightdraft ships. The west Negros plain is the most important area in the island from an agricultural point of view. Associated are large towns, adequate roads, narrow-gauge railways (for transporting cane to the mills), and a dense population.

The Tablas plateau in southwestern Negros, a thinly inhabited and little known area, is relatively isolated from the rest of the island. Here occurs the only break in the national road system encircling Negros. While once a plateau surface, the Tablas area is now a hilly upland, deeply dissected. Perhaps with the exception of [161] the central mountains, the Tablas plateau is the most undeveloped area in Negros. The few settlements are located along the coast.

The Southwest Coastal lowlands, extending westward from Tolong to the southern part of the plain of west Negros are a series of disconnected flood plains created where the rivers deposit their sediments on reaching the

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sea. There are no roads in the region, which is isolated from the rest of Negros by the Tablas plateau. The majority of settlements, such as Asia and Sipalay, are found along the coast.

Siaton municipality is located in the Southeastern Coastal lowland which stretches from the westward boundary of Tolong to the Bais lowland in the north. Over 80 miles in length, its width varies from less than a mile to not more than five miles. In some localities between Siaton and Tolong, the hills almost reach the sea with scant space for the road. Small flood plains have been built by the rivers in this region.

> Steep slopes, coupled with meager rainfall and porous soils, have precluded the growing of either sugar cane or rice, except in small local areas, so that the substitute crop of corn assumes a greater importance.[18]

Siaton municipality begins with the Bondo ("Mound") plateau, just south of Zamboanguita poblacion where the National Road turns west and climbs to an elevation of about 400 feet. Bondo is a relatively level platform, moderately dissected by small streams dry except during the rainy season. From the bluffs along the sea, the plateau rises, first gently, and then with increasing undulation as it blends into the southeastern volcanic lands. Bondo is dotted with isolated dwellings, scattered fields of corn, camotes and upland rice. A spur from the National Road runs south to Barrio Bonbonon.

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[18] Wernstedt, op. cit., p.20.

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Descending from the plateau, the National Road passes through the small riverine plain of the Canaway River. The plain is about three miles long and nearly a mile wide. The valley is surrounded by hills on the west and north, Bondo on the east and the sea on the south. The largest acreage of lowland rice is grown here on the best rice land in Siaton municipality. A low finger-ridge to the west separates the Canaway and Siaton rivers north of Siaton poblacion.

East of the Siaton River the lowland tapers along the coast. South of Sitio Balaso dead coconut trees stand in the surf and the people speak of how "the land is sinking." The shoreline near Barrio Giliga-on, however, gives evidence of recent uplifting. From Siaton poblacion to the western boundaries of the municipality, the larger barrios like Bonawon and Giliga-on are located in small alluvial deltas.

The Siaton River valley extends north about six miles. Above Sitio Dolog, the river rushes noisily through a boulder-strewn bed, e[illegible]sed by mountains that rise abruptly on both sides. (See Plate VI.)[1] The largest area of level cultivated land is on the west side of the river where Barrio Sandolot is located. East and west of the valley are rolling hills covered with secondary growth and large areas of cogon grass. There are no roads into this area. During the rainy season travel is quite difficult, since fording the river in flood often is impossible.

1 [See p 42, cat. 133 or 311 - Analyst]

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
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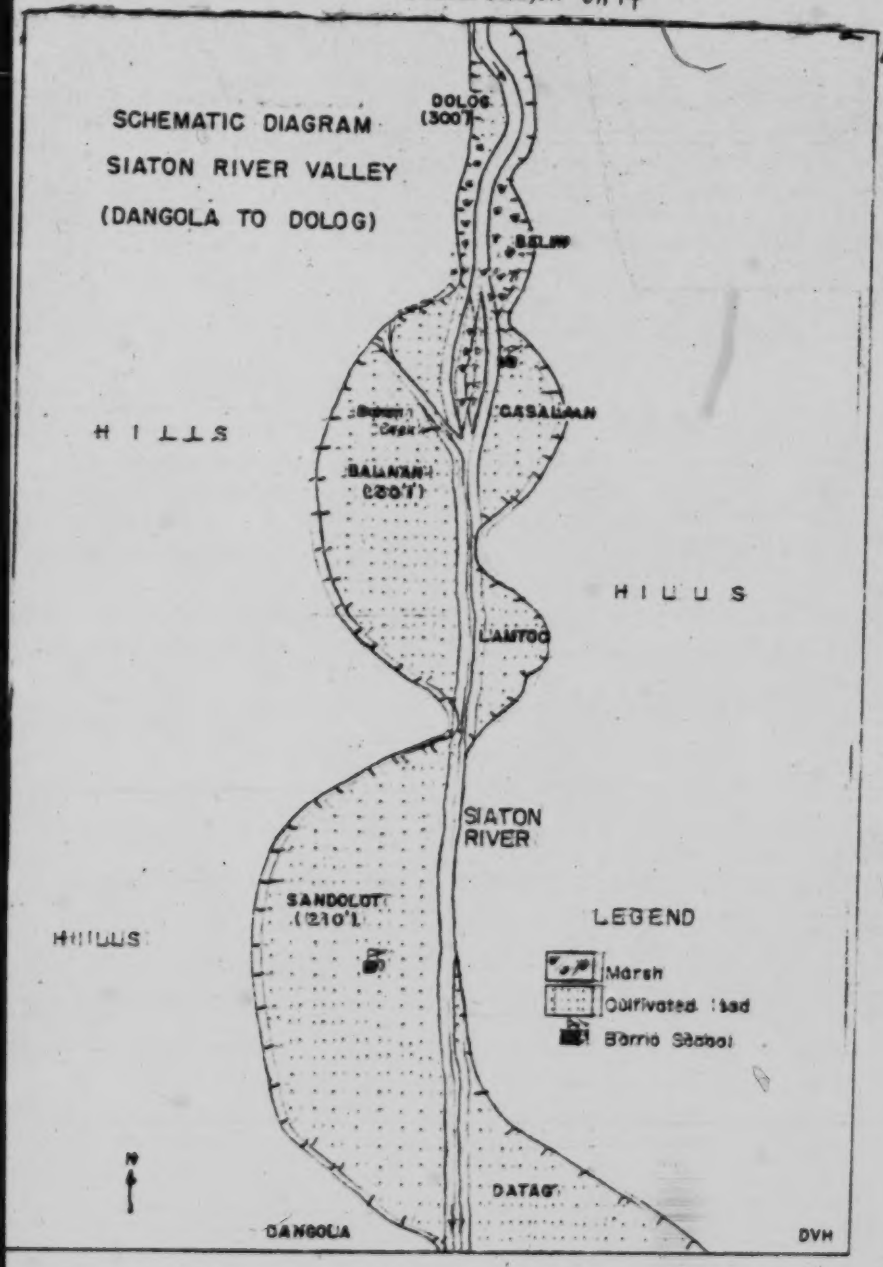

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The Bais lowland, a sugar cane region, was created by the confluence of several large rivers, e.g., Panambalan, Lotan, Montenegro, and Tanjay. Small valley floors extend back into the mountains, up each river, making a many-fingered interior boundary for this lowland. This lowland was probably one of the areas first [167] settled, and in 1845 had the densest population in Negros, according to Buzeta.[19]

The Eastern Coastal plains are like a broken chain, linking the San Carlos and the Bais lowlands.

> Wherever a river breaches the mountain wall and debouches onto the coast, a small alluvial plain or delta is formed. On the larger of these plains are located the municipalities, such as Guihulngan, La Libertad, Tayasan, and Ayungon. Where there is limited level land, small barrios or sitios of only a few houses are found. Since many of these plains are relatively isolated from one another, the agriculture has tended to be mainly a subsistence economy.[20]

Guihulngan is a small interisland port with daily shipping connections with Cebu.

The San Carlos lowland extends about 30 miles along the eastern coast of Negros. To the lowland's west the mountains rise abruptly to elevations of four to six thousand feet. This alluvial lowland is almost entirely

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[19] Manuel Buzeta and Felipe Bravo, Diccionario Geográfico, Estadístico, Histórico, de las Islas Filipinas. Madrid, 1851, pp.555-9. Wernstedt, op. cit., p.91, Plate I, has an 1845 population map of Negros.

[20] Wernstedt, op. cit., p.19.

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planted with sugar cane. San Carlos is a regular stop for many of the inter-island ships from Mindanao and Manila while the port facilities at San Carlos sugar mill service overseas shipping.

The Northeastern Hill Lands of Negros Occidental, located north of the San Carlos lowland, is a region of low rolling hills with steep slopes yet not sufficiently steep to prevent caingin agriculture. Small basin-like plains nestled among the hills and equally small flood plains constitute the major portion of level land.

Negros' backbone is the Central Mountain range running from north to south and covered with dense vegetation, except where caingin agriculture has produced cogon grass areas. This mountainous region of Negros, the home of primitive groups, remains an unbroken barrier to east-west travel except for one road that winds through a two-thousand-foot pass south of Canlaon Volcano. Because of landslides this road is often closed during the southwest monsoon season.

The crestline of the Central Mountain range lies east to the center of Negros and slopes toward the eastern coast in many localities. In the north-central and southeastern parts of the range are a number of volcanic cones, the highest being Canlaon. The Central Mountain range is a source of timber and of many forest products such as resins and rattan.

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> Skirting the flanks of almost all of the central mountain mass is a band or transition zone between the steeper mountain slopes and the low-lying coastal plains. This is a belt that is generally made up of low hills. In almost every case the slopes of these foothills have been burned by cultivators and are now either devoted to crops or have been left in the tall cogonal grasses which quickly take over cleared areas that are not permanently cultivated...The river valleys are often over five hundred feet in depth, and present a tremendous obstacle to travel 'across the grain' of the land.[21]

In summary, the most economically important and developed agricultural regions of Negros today are its plains, particularly the fertile West Negros plain. Negros Oriental is less fortunate in having more mountains and fewer plains; the latter are often small, mainly disconnected lowlands, separated by eastern spurs of the Central Mountain range or rugged foothills. The southwestern portion of Negros is a hilly upland, between one and two thousand feet in elevation, relatively isolated and undeveloped. The source of the major rivers of Negros, severely eroded and covered with dense forests, is the Central Mountain range serving as a stout backbone for the island. This range terminates in a southeastern mountain knot near Siaton municipality. As Negros' landforms are not absolute determinants, they have exerted a powerful influence on land use. The landforms give meaning to the agricultural patterns and cultural diversities of the people of Negros.

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[21] Wernstedt, op. cit., p.22.

when copra prices fall school enrollments decrease. For the most part, the Chinese control the buying and selling of copra. Their trucks come from Dumaguete to pick up copra from stores where Filipinos sell their small crops.

The Northern Corn-Coconut region begins in the south with Manjuyod municipality and continues to the north to Canlaon and Vallehermoso municipalities. A northern extension of this region includes Negros Occidental's eastern littoral. Both the southern and northern municipalities of this region are transitional to sugar cane agriculture. This northern region is larger than the Southern Corn-Coconut area; the former has about 743 square miles of which 239 square miles (32 per cent) are actively cultivated.

Many geographic factors typical of the southern region also characterize the Northern Corn-Coconut region. There is less level land in the northern region; the small riverine floodplains and narrow littoral account for most of it. While annual precipitation is greater than in the southern region, the northern area also is subject to droughts. Transportation facilities are not as adequate as in the south, and the northern region lacks an adequate port. The only sizeable port is at Cuihulngan where shallow-draft inter-island ships stop. The rest of the coast is lined with shallow inshore waters or offshore coral reefs.

Population densities are greater in the northern region with an average density of 289 persons per

The northwest part of Caticugan is still quite boggy. Along the base of the bluff runs a shallow stream which eventually joins the Caticugan Creek. To the west is the low bluff of Caticugan; Lucas Ege, founder of Caticugan, built canals here to drain the many springs. The hills are covered with bamboo groves, shrubs, and some cocoanuts. Taking the path up the bluff one emerges at Upper Naga. To the north a hill undulates down to a grassy shelf on which stand the houses of Upper Naga. Following the crest of the bluff southward one comes to the main settlement of Naga where a small bamboo school is located. The nearest house has several jars of bright-colored candies in the window sill to attract the few pennies of the children. To the west is Mantuyop River, a rockier and shallower stream than the Siaton River. Across the Mantuyop River the hills are covered with low-growing trees and shrubs.

If the opposite direction had been taken on leaving Caticugan one would have ascended the small plateau of Dangola, rocky, grass-covered and with scattered fields. The southwestern part of Dangola is covered with grass and large wallow holes where carabaos roll happily in thick mud. To the northwest is the level riverine plain of Sandolot with fenced fields and residences. Descending toward the east from Dangola one arrives at Talo-ot, separated from Caticugan

proper by the muddy Caticugan Creek. This is a rocky sandy area where the Siaton River once flowed. 133

Walking through the community one speculates that few visible changes have occurred during the past several centuries. The houses are basically the same, bamboo and nipa and rattan. The wooden plow that lies in the field must have been similar to that used by the owner's great-grandparents. Many pigs still feed from hollow stone troughs. Spears and blow-guns are found in some houses and ancient rites precede a wild pig hunt. Yet the modest chapel with its tire rim "bell" and the houses with family altars of plaster saints betoken the Catholic Spaniards. The old bow and arrow, used to shoot fish in the river, have been modified, for boys now hunt their prey with arrows of steel umbrella rib, propelled by strips of inner tubing. The barrio and elementary schools with coeducational facilities and stress on "integration" bespeak American influence. As one talks with the people and studies their way of life, the pre-Hispanic cultural base emerges: beliefs in unseen sprites of shaded spring and wooded hill, in blonde-haired dwarfs that race happily in the drainage canals, in the placating of departed souls with food offerings and various modified pagan agricultural rites. The very language reflects Hindu contacts. The wooden handles 178 177 [176]

20: Hart E-5 (195.) 1954 OA1 Philippines
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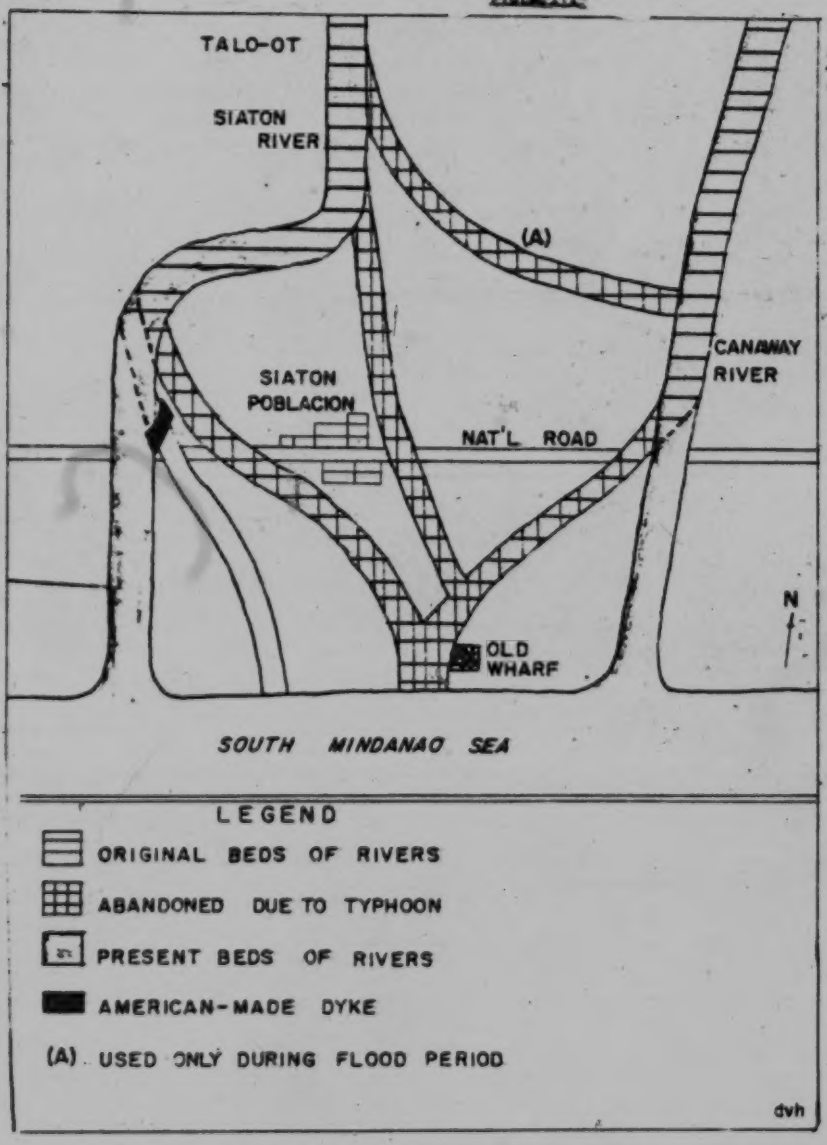
Plate XIX



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SIATON - CANAWAY RIVER PATTERNS

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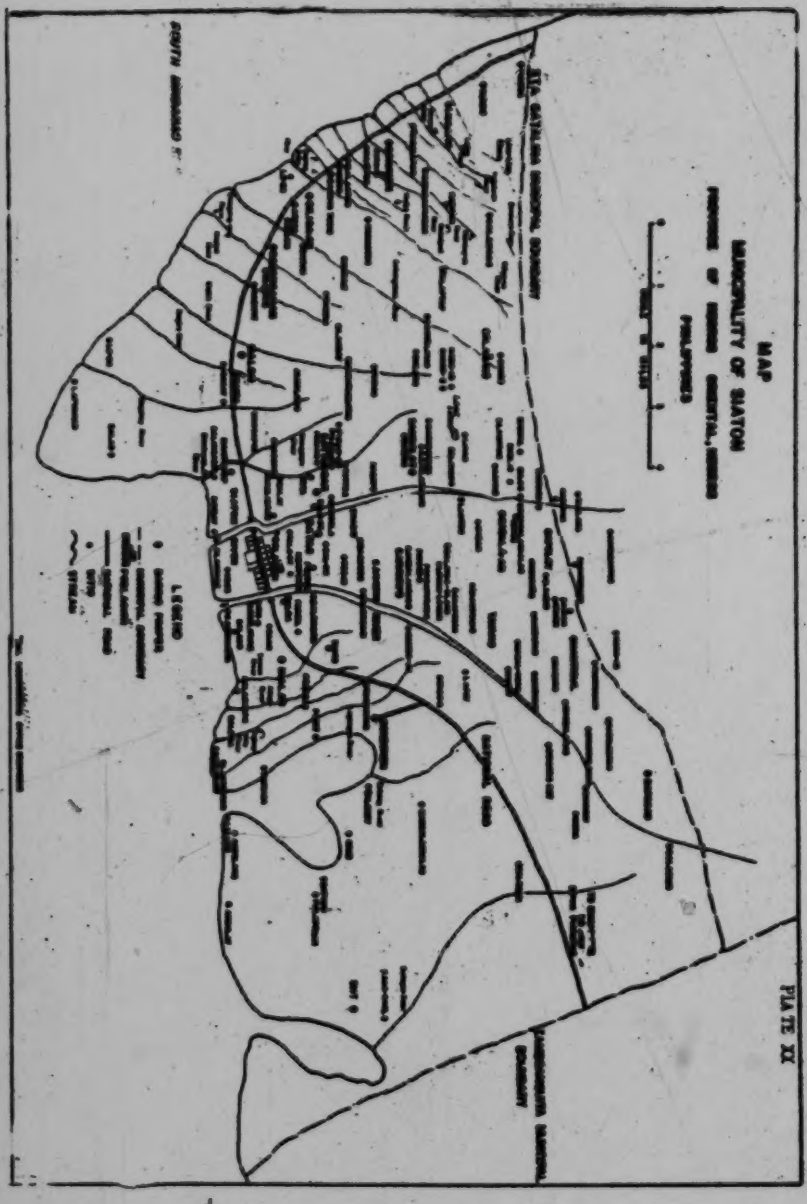

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Present day Barrio Caticugan's land was later purchased by Father Manuel Cabriada on Romero's transfer to Dumaguete. Later Cabriada was sent as the first missionary to Tolong. In 1872 Cabriada returned to Siaton. When Julio Adan replaced Cabriada he purchased the land and later sold it to Lucas Ege for fifteen dollars. Lucas Ege lived to be quite old; he died around 1898, according to his grandson. While the exact date is unknown, Ege's development of Caticugan must have begun after 1872 and before 1898. I estimate Ege began to drain the land and settle it with his relatives about 1885.

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312

Before its purchase by Ege, the pocket-size plain of Caticugan was a bog. Little of the land could be cultivated and planted with rice. The ground was so boggy that "carabaos could not walk on most of the land" and "a lighted cigar dropped on the earth would ignite it. The ground would burn, without smoke, just like ashes." Ege's friends warned him that the land was haunted for they saw mysterious torches there at night, the eerie handiwork of the <u>encantos</u> (unseen spirits). Lucas Ege, however, purchased the land and began to build a series of drainage canals in order to increase the cultivable area.

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Before the 1898 Siaton River flood, the river ran at the base of the Dangola bluff and turned southward along the present course of Caticugan Creek. After this flood, the Siaton changed its course to its present bed.

Until this time Talo-ot was separated from Barrio Caticugan. Dangola and Naga were settled later than Barrio Caticugan. Naga was first owned by Pablo Radoc and was inhabited by only two families in 1899. A typhoon in 1912 flooded Barrio Caticugan, covering the land with water waist-deep that left a thick blanket of mud on subsistence.

How Some of the Barrios Received Their Names

Barrio Caticugan received its name from the ticug reed that once grew in abundance in the swampy area. This reed is used today to make mats in many parts of the Philippines. Ca is a Cebuano prefix which means "the place where." Caticugan translates as "The Place where the Ticug Grow." With the draining of the swamps, and the increasing number of carabao kept in the barrio, the ticugs disappeared. Naga, Talo-ot, Casala-an, Bantolinao, and Dangola all received their names from trees that once grew in their locality.[68]

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[68] Naga is also called naga. Luis J. Reyes, Philippine Woods. Technical Bulletin No. 7. Manila, Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Bureau of Printing, 1938, p. 143. Bantolinao trees (Diospyros sp.) that grew in this area were said to have a black heartwood that made them valuable for decorating furniture; they were also called ebony. Juan Felix de la Encarnacion, Diccionario Bisaya-Espanol: Compuesto por el R. P. Fr. Juan Felix de las Encarnacion, provincial. que has sido dos veces de Agustinos Descalzos de la Provincia de S. Nicolas de Tolentino de Filipinas. Tercera Edicion. Manila, Tipografia de Amigos del Pais, 1885, p. 38. Vide Reyes, op. cit., pp. 407-11.